

Team begins preparing Michigan's application for share of federal Early Learning Challenge funding

A team headed by Joan Blough, transition leader for the Michigan Office of Great Start, has begun work on the state's application for a share of \$500 million being awarded to states by the federal government as part of its Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge.

To view a roster of team members, [click here](#). The Office of Great Start was created by an executive order signed by Governor Rick Snyder earlier this year. Blough, Vice President of Great Start System Development and Evaluation for the Early Childhood Investment Corporation, was named transition leader for the new office in June.

The Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge seeks to “encourage states to develop bold and comprehensive plans for raising the quality of early learning programs across America.” Final guidance for the competition was recently issued; applications are due from states by October 19th. You may view a copy of the application at ([insert US DOE link](#)). Grants will be awarded by December 31, 2011.

The purpose of the Application Preparation Team is to:

- Complete a current status assessment of the state's early learning system, building from the assessment completed by Michigan's Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)
- Provide content expertise to inform the development of the ELC application
- Assist in the identification and engagement of constituency groups and other key stakeholders in the process of the application development
- Contribute to the development of application materials.

While the timeline to complete the Early Learning Challenge grant is quite short, the Michigan Office of Great Start is committed to providing you with regular updates on our progress as well as offering sections of the application for your review and comment. These communications will be posted on the Michigan Department of Education's Office of Great Start webpage as well as the Early Childhood Investment Corporation's website. Please plan to visit either site at least weekly to check for these updates. You may also submit general questions or comments on the Michigan Department of Education's Office of Great Start web page. For further details about the challenge and the state's application, see Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge under Grants and Programs below. outlined in his special message on Reinventing Michigan's Education System given April 27, 2011. To view this special message, please visit www.mi.gov/Snyder.

To view a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding, [click here](#). The Michigan Office of Great Start will be housed on the fourth floor of the Hannah Building in Lansing.